

Committee which could also be very helpful to our further understanding of the situation. The Economic Research Service and other agencies of the Department of Agriculture could make available to us information that would be very helpful and constructive as we try to decide what is best in this situation for our farmers around the country.

I don't want to overdue this or guild the lily too brightly. But I personally respect the Senator so much—and he knows that—and consider him a great friend. I again express my personal appreciation for his being here tonight and for his leadership in the agriculture area specifically.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Mississippi, who is my friend and whose leadership I appreciate so much.

Let me inquire of the distinguished Senator from Mississippi if he knows of further debate. If not, I make an inquiry because I have been asked to substitute for the leader in making motions.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I know of no other Senator who seeks recognition on this. I think it would be appropriate to go to final wrap-up.

Mr. LUGAR. I thank the Senator.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TAXPAYER REFORM ACT OF 1999

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I wish to express my support for the Bingaman amendment to recommit S. 1429 to the Senate Finance Committee which would have enabled us to clarify that debt reduction is a top priority for this government in spending any budget surplus.

As we say in my home state of Arkansas, the best time to fix the roof is when the sun is still shining.

Now is the time for us to take steps to reduce our enormous federal debt. I believe we have an unprecedented opportunity before us. We've been making tough decisions—living within our means, so to speak.

We have a surplus that's bigger than we thought it would be and a chance to save Social Security for future generations, protect for Medicare and help older people afford prescription drugs.

So, now we have a shot at reducing our nation's debt, which in turn will lower interest rates and put more money back in the pockets of more Americans.

Using a major portion of any surplus accumulated in these times of pros-

perity to improve the financial integrity of the federal government. Reducing the national debt is a smart long-term strategy for the U.S. economy and it must be our priority in this bill.

Reducing our national debt will provide a tax cut for millions of Americans because it will restrain interest rates, saving them money on variable mortgages, new mortgages, auto loans, credit card payments, etc. Each percentage point decrease in interest rates would save American families hundreds of dollars every year.

By reducing the national debt we will protect future generations from increasing tax burdens. Currently, more than 25 percent of individual income taxes go to paying interest on our national debt. Every dollar of lower debt saves more than one dollar for future generations, a savings that can be used for tax cuts, or for covering the baby boomers retirement without tax increases.

Reducing the national debt will also make it easier for the government to deal with the future costs of Social Security and Medicare and repay the Social Security trust fund when the Social Security system faces annual shortfalls.

In addition, reducing the national debt will reduce our reliance on foreign investors. More than \$1.2 trillion of the national debt—roughly one third of the publicly held debt—is held by foreign investors. In 1998, the U.S. government paid \$91 billion in interest payments to foreign investors.

It was not the American way to live beyond one's means. Our parents taught us to work hard so that we can pay our bills, clothe our children and save for the future.

Accumulating debt and simply letting it grow and grow is not—and should not be—an option for most families around this country. It should no longer be the practice of this government.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has repeatedly advised Congress that the most important action we could take to maintain a strong and growing economy is to pay down the national debt. I, for one, believe he is on the right track.

Clarifying our intent to prioritize debt reduction is the right thing to do.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, July 29, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,640,577,276,840.14 (Five trillion, six hundred forty billion, five hundred seventy-seven million, two hundred seventy-six thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and fourteen cents).

One year ago, July 29, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,543,291,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-three billion, two hundred ninety-one mil-

lion). Five years ago, July 29, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,636,362,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred thirty-six billion, three hundred sixty-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 29, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$476,155,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-six billion, one hundred fifty-five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,164,422,276,840.14 (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-four billion, four hundred twenty-two million, two hundred seventy-six thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and fourteen cents) during the past 25 years.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, July 30, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,638,655,711,931.60 (Five trillion, six hundred thirty-eight billion, six hundred fifty-five million, seven hundred eleven thousand, nine hundred thirty-one dollars and sixty cents).

One year ago, July 30, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,544,483,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-four billion, four hundred eighty-three mil-

lion). Fifteen years ago, July 30, 1984, the Federal debt stood at \$1,535,192,000,000 (One trillion, five hundred thirty-five billion, one hundred ninety-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 30, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$475,337,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-five billion, three hundred thirty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,163,318,711,931.60 (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-three billion, three hundred eighteen million, seven hundred eleven thousand, nine hundred thirty-one dollars and sixty cents) during the past 25 years.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of this secretaries.

##### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### REPORT ON THE UNITED STATES EMERGENCY REFUGEE AND MIGRATION ASSISTANCE FUND—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 54

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message